

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 HA-05

OMB-01 TRSE-00 /085 W

-----117242 241149Z /23

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0275

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

UNCLAS PRETORIA 0419

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RH, PDEV, PINT

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: INTERNAL TALKS

REF: PRETORIA383; PRETORIA 405

1. SUMMARY: JANUARY 23 SESSION OF TALKS ENDED WITH NO APPARENT PROGRESS ON THE ISSUE OF THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR THE 28 GUARANTEED WHITE SEATS. SMITH IS REPORTEDLY HOLDING OUT FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS ON SITHOLE'S STANCE WITH AT LEAST ONE SAYING HE IS ABOUT TO COMPROMISE ON EIGHT YEARS. ANOTHER ACCOUNT SAYS SITHOLE IS ADAMANT ON FIVE YEARS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE AMNESTY
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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH HE SAYS HAS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION HIS "BONA FIDES." END SUMMARY:

2. LATEST ROUND TO TALKS, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, WERE HELD ON MORNING OF JANUARY 23. AFTER COMPLETING APPROXIMATELY A TWO HOUR SESSION, NONE OF THE DELEGATES WOULD RESPOND TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS. REPORTEDLY THE TALKS ARE NOW HELD UP ON THE LENGTH OF

TIME THE 28 GUARANTEED WHITE SEATS WILL PREVAIL. SMITH IS SUPPOSEDLY INSISTING OF FIFTEEN YEARS BUT MAY ACCEPT TEN; MUZOREWA AND CHIRAU REPORTEDLY HAVE SETTLED ON EIGHT YEARS OR TWO SESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT, WHICHEVER IS LONGER; AND SITHOLE IS HOLDING OUT FOR FIVE YEARS.

3. ONE PRESS ACCOUNT HAS REPORED THAT SITHOLE, AFTER MEETING WITH HIS CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER THE WEEKEND, IS READY TO COMPROMISE HIS STAND AND SETTLE FOR EIGHT YEARS. ANOTHER OBSERVE, IAN BLACK OF THE CTIZEN, REPORTS, HOWEVER, THAT SITHOLE IS ADAMANT IN HIS STAND ON FIVE YEARS. IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED JANUARY 23, BLACK SAYS SITHOLE STATED THAT " THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF OUR MAKING FURTHER CONCESSIONS ON THIS ISSUE... WE HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FEARS AND ANXIETIES OF THE WHITES AND THIS IS WHY WE DELIBERATELY WENT AGAINST OUR OWN PRINCIPLE OF NON-RACIALISM (THE GUARANTEED WHITE SEATS AND SEPARATE ROLES)... WE HAVE REACHED A BROAD MEASURE OF AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS ALREADY, AND THAT INCLUDES THINGS LIKE PENSIONS AND SO ON. THE ONLY POINT OUTSTANDING IS THE LENGTH OF TIME TO BE ALLOTTED FOR GUARANTEED WHITE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT.. AND SMITH WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT FIVE YEARS IN THE END.. WE FELT THAT A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS WOULD BE AFAIR TIME TO ALLOW THE WHITE PEOPLE HERE TO READJUST THEMSELVES TO THEIR NEW CIRCUMSTANCES." IN A SUBSEQUENT REPORT, BLACK STATES THAT IF THERE HAD BEEN " ANY FAINT HOPE" THAT SITHOLE WOULD COMPROMISE, THAT HOPE DIED WITH THE NEW AMNESTY

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PROPOSALS (REF B) OF THE GOVERNMENT. A SITHOLE SPOKESMAN HAS CALLED THE LEAFLET DROPS " A SERIOUS SETBACK" SAYING THAT THE TALKS ARE " NOW IN A STATE OF CRISIS (BECAUSE) THE DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THESE PAMPHLETS HAS CAUSED US GREAT PROBLEMS IN CONTINUING TO PROVE OUR BONA FIDES WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION OF US AGREEING TO AN INCREASE ABOVE THE FIVE YEARS OF GUARANTEES." THE GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY DENIED THAT THE TALKS WERE AT A CRISIS OR THAT THE AMNESTY OFFER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH SITHOLE'S POSITION ON THE LENGTH OF WHITE GUARANTTED SEATS.

4. IN THE JANUARY 23 INTERVIEW WITH BLACK, SITHOLE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD NOT WRITTEN OFF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. HE SAID THAT " IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY AT OUR OWN DISCUSSIONS INTERNALLY ON THE SAFEGUARDS... YOU WILL FIND THAT ALL THESE ARE ITEMS THAT ARE TO BE FOUND WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. SITHOLE ALSO SAID THAT TO BE " REALISTIC" THE PARTIES HAD TO AGREE THAT BRITAIN HAD A PART TO PLAY IN THE SETTLEMEN T.

ON HIS OWN POPULARITY, SITHOLE IS QUOTED AS SAYING HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT " IF WE COULD CALL AN ELECTION TOMORROW ON ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE, I AM SURE MY PARTY WOULD WIN". HE SAID

THAT THE GUARANTEES FOR WHITES WOULD BE "HARD TO SELL" TO THE
BLACKS BUT THEY WOULD "ACCEPT IT ON OUR WORD (AND) THE
GUERRILLAS WILL CEASE TO FIGHT." BLACK ALSO CITES ANC
SOURCES AS SAYING MUZOREWA IS "POLITICALLY NAIVE" AND IS WILLING
TO MAKE CONCESSIONS WHICH PREJUDICE THE CHANCES OF
FINDING ACCEPTANCE AMONGST BLACKS FOR A SETTLEMENT FORMULA.

5. THE TALKS ARE REPORTEDLY RESUMING TODAY, JANUARY 24.
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